Mines from 2.4 Million Tonnes Per Year (MTPY) to 4.8 MTPY and Alumina Refinery from 0.8 MTPY to 1.575 MTPY, both situated at Damanjodi at an investment of Rs. 1664.60 crores (June, 1996 price level) has been approved by the Government. The expansion is to be completed in 51 months.

[Translation]

Bailadila Diamond Mines in Madhya Pradesh

3102. SHRI PUNNU LAL MOHLE : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh visited South Africa in connection with the contract of Bailadila Diamond Mines in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the benefits likely to accure and the income likely to be earned by the State through this contract;

(c) whether the Union Government propose to take over this mine and give the State Government its share of money; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) to (d). The State Government of Madhya Pradesh has informed that there is no diamond mine in Bailadila. However, a delegation led by the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh had visited South Africa to study the facilities available in that country for investigation and evaluation of diamond bearing kimberlites and its mining, processing and procedure for sale being practised in that country.

Independent Radio/TV Authority

3103. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ :
PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA :
DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI :
SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to set up an Independent authority for radio and television network soon as appeared in 'Financial Express' dated August 30, 1996;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the time by which the said authority is likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (c). No decision has been taken by the Government on this issue as yet. Government is in the process of consultation with the various political parties and a meeting was taken by the Information and Broadcasting Minister in this regard on 13th September, 1996. A questionnaire was also sent to them and only a few of them have responded so far. After taking these views into consideration, a Comprehensive Broadcasting Bill will soon be introduced in the Parliament.

[English]

Medium Capacity Long Range Aircraft

3104. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Air India is Planning to slow down the induction of Medium Capacity Long Range (MCLR) aircraft by sharply reducing the pace of aircraft acquisition to meet the $2 billion deal in a phased manner as reported in the 'Times of India', New Delhi dated August, 1996;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) the reasons therefor; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (d). The proposal for acquistion of Medium Capacity Long Range (MCLR) aircraft by Air India, is at present under consideration of a Sub-Committee of the Board of Air India Limited.

[Translation]

Difference between Vayudoot and Alliance Air

3105. SHRI SAT MAHAJAN : will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) the difference between Vayudoot and recently formed Alliance Air;

(b) whether the Government have ensured that Allianne Air may not run in heavy losses in the near future on the lines of Vayudoot; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) Vayudoot was incorporated as a company owned equally by Air India and Indian Airlines. Airline Allied Services Limited (AASL) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Indian Airlines, activated to supplement its services. 'Alliance Air' is the brand name of the airline operated by Airline Allied Services Limited.

(b) and (c). Alliance Air is economically viable as it is deploying B-737 aircraft which are more efficient than the aircraft used by Vayudoot and the routes operated by it have adequate passenger traffic.